

Courier, Agassi on collision course

PARIS, June 2: Jim Courier and Andre Agassi tangled last year in the French Open final. This year, they are on course for a collision one round earlier, reports AP.

Each has one more difficult hurdle to clear before Agassi gets a chance to avenge his five-set loss.

Courier, the No 1 seed, faced hard-serving Goran Ivanisevic in the opening men's quarterfinal Tuesday. Agassi, who says his sometimes-erratic game comes to life at Grand Slams, was to follow against Pete Sampras in an all-American showdown.

Sampras is seeded third, yet he accepts that Agassi, seeded 11th, is the favorite.

"The fact that I'm in the quarterfinals — I don't think too many people expected me to be here," Sampras, a hard-court specialist, said after beating Germany's Carl-Uwe

Steeb 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 Monday. He called it his best match ever on clay.

As expected, all four top-seeded women advanced to Tuesday's quarterfinals.

The pairings include top-seeded Monica Seles, the two-time defending champion, against No 5 Jennifer Capriati; No 2 Steffi Graf against unseeded Natalia Zverva of Belarus; third-seeded Gabriela Sabatini against No 7 Conchita Martinez of Spain; and No 4 Arantxa Sanchez Vicario against unseeded Manon Bollegraf of the Netherlands.

The last two men's quarterfinals are scheduled for Wednesday, pitting France's Henri Leconte against Sweden's Niclas Kulti, and Russian Andrei Cherkasov against Petr Korda of Czechoslovakia. Korda, at No 7, is the only seed left in the bottom half of the draw.

Courier has won 20 straight matches and along with Leconte, has not lost a set during

the tournament.

But if he gets past eighth-seed Ivanisevic, he will face a confident opponent in either Agassi or Sampras.

Agassi was delighted with his 6-1, 6-3, 7-5 fourth-round victory Monday over Spain's Emilio Sanchez, who had easily won the last meeting of the two in March at Indian Wells, Calif.

"I never thought he would play like this," Sanchez said. "This really emphasizes where my game was at the beginning of the year versus where it is in now," Agassi said. "Emilio is a tough competitor....The fact that I did beat him as comfortably as I did really gives me a lot of confidence going into the latter part of the week."

How much better was Agassi now?

"I would have to say, if not 100 percent, then sure close to it," he replied.

Agassi admitted he sometimes lacks concentration dur-

ing regular ATP Tour events.

"But when you get to the Grand Slams, you get the best in the world, and I think it taps a part of me that I don't see as much as I would really like to," he said.

"It's weird. In normal tournaments, even when I'm playing well, I always feel like an underdog. I'm almost surprised when I go out there and win. When I play a Grand Slam, I am very arrogant... I feel like I am unbeatable out there."

Sampras felt unbeatable against Steeb, to whom he lost on clay in straight sets in April.

"This was the best clay court match I've ever played so far," said Sampras, raised on the hard courts of California. "I was patient. I served extremely well."

"This is the quickest clay court of the year," added Sampras, who had 16 aces. "It's surface you definitely can serve and volley on."

FRENCH OPEN QUOTES

PARIS, June 2: What they are saying at the French open tennis championships:

"WHEN I play a Grand Slam I am very arrogant the way I feel out there. I feel extremely confident and I feel like I am unbeatable at times" — Andre Agassi, bidding for the singles title after losing in the final for the last two years.

"I don't mind adding things to my game and trying different things but I am certainly not going to get rid of what I know" — Andre Agassi, on where to draw the line.

"I played Davis Cup in the Philippines and the crowd were pushing the Philippine player. I have played in the Italian Open against Italian Omar Camporese on the Centre Court. I have played John McEnroe here in the first round. You could say I am pretty used to it" — Sweden's Niclas Kulti after learning that he would play Frenchman Henri Leconte on the Centre Court in the semi-finals.

"I don't have a coach. Only my father is here. He is not a specialist but he keeps me in a good mood" — Russian quarter-finalist Andrei Cherkasov.

"Sometimes I am very nervous and I start screaming. When I am quiet, when I am not nervous, when I am not throwing down rackets.... it is much better" — Andrei Cherkasov on his decision to adopt a different approach to on court crises.

"He is very fit. He hits very hard from the baseline. He has a very good first serve. He has a very strong forehand. He is afraid of nothing.... It is not going to be easy" — Henri Leconte, referring to his Swedish quarter-final opponent Niclas Kulti.

"I am going to take my phone off the hook" — Henri Leconte, asked how he was going to prepare for his quarter-final. — AFP.

Graf, Sabatini struggle to reach semifinals

PARIS, June 2: Jolted by losing sets for the first time in the tournament, Steffi Graf and Gabriela Sabatini stormed back against tough opponents Tuesday and advanced to the semifinals of the French Open, reports AP.

Sabatini, the No 3 seed, seemed on the brink of defeat after dropping the first set to Spain's Conchita Martinez and trailing 0-3 in the second. Suddenly, the seventh-seeded Martinez unraveled and Sabatini won nine straight games en route to a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory.

Second-seeded Graf, a two-time French Open champion, battled past Natalia Zvereva of Belarus, 6-3, 6-7, (7-4), 6-3.

Graf served for the match at 5-4 in the second set, but was broken then lost the tiebreaker as Zvereva hit backhand winners on the last two points. Graf rebounded to win the first four games of the final set.

"I needed to have a tough, close match," Graf said. "I was disappointed by the way I served. That made me a little

bit crazy.But I won the match, so it's not too serious."

In other quarterfinals, Monica Seles, the top seed, was to play No 5 Jennifer Capriati; and Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, the No 4 seed, was paired with unseeded Manon Bollegraf of the Netherlands. However, rain began as Sabatini completed her victory, delaying the start of the next matches.

"The court was little bit dangerous," Sabatini said. "It was very slippery."

Sabatini, who admitted to nervousness at the start of the match, said she came alive at 0-3 in the second set out of desperation.

"I knew I had to do something," she said. "I just started hitting the ball."

Graf hopes to regain the title from Seles, the winner here in 1990 and 1991, and also atone for a humiliating 6-0, 6-2 loss to Sanchez Vicario in last year's semifinals.

Zvereva, a finalist here in 1988, has now lost all nine of her matches with Graf. This was only the second time she had extended the German to three sets.



Andre Agassi hammers a backhand during his fourth round win over Spain's Emilio Sanchez in the French Open at Roland Garros in Paris Monday. Agassi won 6-1, 6-3, 7-5. —AFP

It's a bus back home for them

HEATHROW, England, June 2: A Yugoslav track team, Pariznan Belgrade, flew home via Bulgaria Monday after flights to and from their own country were banned by United Nations sanctions, reports AP.

According to a spokesman for the national Yugoslav airline, J.A.T., the party of 26 competitors and officials, who competed Saturday and Sunday in the European Clubs Championships at Birmingham, were unable to take their scheduled flight to Belgrade.

Instead, they took a Balkan airlines flight to Sofia and then were scheduled to take a bus to Belgrade.

The UN has ordered sanctions against Serbia-led Yugoslavia, holding it responsible for continuing fighting in neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The sanctions also involve cutting sports links with Yugoslavia.

The International Tennis Federation, has removed Yugoslavia from the Davis and Federation Cup team competitions. And the world and European soccer organization, FIFA and UEFA, also has banned the team with the result it has been booted out of this month's European Championships and replaced by Denmark.

Pressure mounts on hero Leconte

PARIS, June 2: He wasn't supposed to be around at this stage of the French Open. Now that he is, the pressure is on.

Beyond question, flamboyant Frenchman Henri Leconte's march to the quarterfinals is the big surprise of the tournament. His only problem is that a goodly portion of his 56 million compatriots expect him to go further, writes AP.

Leconte, a one-time top 10 player, has undergone a series of back operations, including one last June, and has dropped to 200th in the world rankings.

Yet in December, he became the improbable hero of a stunning upset of the United States as France won its first Davis Cup in 59 years. Now, after an indifferent showing this season (a record of 5-6) and even some thoughts about quitting, he's back in the limelight again.

He crushed Uruguay's Marcelo Filippini, 6-3, 6-2 Monday as the center-court crowd chanted his name, completing four rounds without loss of a set. Among his victims was the No. 4 seed, Michael Stich.

"He's playing very confidently," Filippini said. "He says, 'OK, now I am going to put in an ace,' and he puts it in."

France's top hope, sixth-seeded Guy Forget, got knocked out in the second round. The last of the other Frenchmen, Cedric Pioline, lost on Monday, leaving Leconte with the full burden of France's hopes.

"The further you go, you feel more pressure," Leconte said. "The pressure is more and more everyday."

This is the 12th French Open for Leconte, 28. He reached the finals in 1988, losing to Mats Wilander in his closest brush with a Grand Slam title.

Leconte seems intent on avoiding long rallies. He charges the net even on his second serve, or during his opponent's service — the baseline sometimes seems like a minefield he wants to escape.

His quarterfinal opponent Wednesday will be the tournament's foremost giant-killer, 21-year-old Niclas Kulti of Sweden. Already, Kulti has knocked off John McEnroe and Michael Chang.

The match will be a very, very hard physically," Leconte said. "He hits very hard from the baseline, has a good first serve.... He's afraid of nothing."

Kulti asserted that a Centre-Court match-up with Leconte before a delirious, pro-Henri crowd was nothing to fear.

"It's going to be great fun out there," said the Swede, who had the crowd against

Germans start as favourites

AMSTERDAM, June 2: Pakistan renew their rivalry with Germany at the Amsterdam five-nations tournament starting on Wednesday, reports AP.

Pakistan will be looking to avenge their defeat at the Champions Trophy in Karachi in February when they gave away an early lead to go down 4-3 to the Germans.

They are still waiting to hear the fate of centre forward Musaddiq Hussain who failed a drug test in Karachi. He now awaits the results of the second test.

Musaddiq insists he took the drug, an analgesic, pain killer. He has backed by Pakistan manager Islahuddin.

On present form though, Germany are favourites to win the men's event where they will be opposed by Olympic champions Great Britain, Spain, Netherlands and Pakistan.

The Netherlands and Spain are in Pakistan's group at the Barcelona Olympics and will provide strong opposition in Amsterdam, Spain, winners of last month's four-nation event in Madrid where they were held goalless by India, have a match winner in short-corner expert Ignacio Escudo. With his scheming brother Xavier, he can turn the fortunes of a game.

The Dutch, coached by

Ilan Jorjisma, have been training hard and do not appear too worried about their consecutive 2-1 defeats to India at the weekend. Floris Jan Bovelander will be as important to the Dutch short-corner as Carsten Fischer to Germany.

Great Britain's hopes have been hit by the injury worries over centre forward Sean Kerly. He has a hamstring injury and the British are still searching for the formula that brought them success at the last Olympics.

The women's competition involves Netherlands, South Korea, Spain, Germany and Great Britain. Britain and Spain have just completed a three-match series in which Britain won the first game but drew the other two.

The speed and fitness of the women should keep them in line for a medal. They must improve their shooting which has so often proved erratic. In set pieces they cannot be compared to the Dutch or Germans.

Aussies pick Olympic squad

SYDNEY, June 2: Australia will be sending half of their men's field hockey squad which bombed out of medal contention at Seoul to next month's Barcelona Olympics.

In the 16-man squad announced here today, team captain Warren Birmingham, David Wansborough, John Bestall, Mark Hager, Graham Reid, Jay Stacy, Ken Wark and Michael York are holdovers from the team that finished fourth in the 1988 Games after starting as gold medal favourites.

Ranked third in the world behind the Netherlands and Pakistan, Australia have high hopes for a medal in Barcelona after failures at the last two Olympics.

The squad's average age is 25, while five players have

played over 100 international and only five have played fewer than 50.

Australia are grouped at Barcelona with Olympic champions Great Britain, Champions Trophy holders Germany, India, Argentina, who defeated them in Darwin last month, and Egypt.

Australia will play in a four-nation tournament in Malaysia later this month against the Netherlands, Malaysia and Japan before heading to Spain.

The team is: Warren Birmingham, David Wansborough, John Bestall, Damon Diletti, Dean Evans, Lachlan Dreher, Lachlan Elmer, Jay Stacy, Lee Bodimeade, Ashley Carey, Mark Hager, Graham Reid, Stephen Davies, Ken Wark, Michael York, Paul Lewis, Coach: Frank Murray.

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Sports sanctions hurt Y'slavs

BELGRADE, June 2: Of all tough international sanctions slapped on Yugoslavia, the one that appears to hurt the most is the sports boycott, reports AP.

This sports-crazy nation has been in shock ever since it learned the Yugoslav soccer team will not play at the European Championships in Sweden and that its world-renowned basketball squad and other athletics may not take part at the Olympic Games in Barcelona.

"We are not killers. We are world, European and Olympic champions," said a statement issued Tuesday by Yugoslavia's sports association.

It protested UN sanctions banning the country's teams and athletes from international competition.

The sports ban was part of a broad package of economic and diplomatic sanctions approved by the UN Security Council last Saturday to pressure Yugoslavia, composed of Serbia and Montenegro, to end their involvement in neighbouring Bosnia.

The measures also include a trade and oil embargo, a cutoff of air links and the freezing of Yugoslav assets abroad.

"We can survive without gasoline and fancy imported goods," said Mile Mitic, a Belgrade pensioner. "But without soccer and basketball.... I don't know."

The International Olympic Committee meets later this week to follow up on UN sanctions and exclude Yugoslavia from the Barcelona Olympics. The Yugoslav Olympic Committee has appealed on the IOC not to expel Yugoslav athletes.

Yugoslavia's highly regarded national basketball team, which includes Los Angeles Lakers center Vlade Divac, has ceased its preparations for a pre-Olympic qualification tournament in France and is returning home.

"It's simply not fair. We are not politicians and warriors. We are only sportsmen and sports should not mix with politics," Divac said in an interview.

Divac's squad is the current

world and European champion. It won silver at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. In Barcelona, Yugoslavia was also expected to field world-class men's water-polo and handball teams as well as women's handball and basketball squads.

The soccer team, which was preparing in Sweden for the European championships starting June 10, also returned to Belgrade on Tuesday.

This soccer team has several players, almost magicians, like Harlem Globetrotters in basketball. They would have impressed Europe, but were not allowed to," said the national team coach, Ivan Cabrinovic.

"They took the players' lives, hearts and love. They did it suddenly," Cabrinovic said.

Denmark, a team the Yugoslavs beat by one goal to make the finals, will replace them in the tournament.

A protest by Yugoslav athletes who have world and Olympic titles is scheduled Thursday. They plan to march through Belgrade wearing their medals.

"We don't want to fight. We want to compete" will be the slogan of the protest.

"The ban is a tragedy for Yugoslav sports," said Danc Korica, the head coach of Yugoslavia's track and field team. "It is absolutely the worst punishment against sportsmen of any nation since World War II."

Y'slav booters leave for home

LEKSAND, Sweden, June 2: The Yugoslav football team left their training camp here today to return home after being banned from the European Championships, reports AP.

They kicked out of the competition after the United Nations ordered trade and sporting sanctions against Serbia.

The players, who have been in Sweden since last Thursday, left the camp in coaches for Stockholm airport. They were to fly home at the expense of the Swedish Football Federation.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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ACROSS

1 Resorts hindrance
5 Bartlett or Bosc
9 — guzzler
12 Goller Irwin
13 Mass revelry
14 Parrot
15 Finished
16 Rug surface
17 Lapidary's item
18 Incubator
19 "Holy cow!"
20 Hirsch sitcom
21 Rhea's cousin
23 Greek cross
25 William Conrad role
28 Circe's ilk
32 "And — grow on"
33 Binge
34 Cruelty
36 Adhere
37 Born
38 Coop occupant

DOWN

1 Boutique
2 Apply blacktop
3 Sheltered
4 Sinuous
5 Cork shooter
6 Pennsylvania port
7 Shoelace tips
8 Reuben holder
9 Enthusiastic
10 Top
11 Big rig
20 Brush cleaner
22 Squirrel's pal
24 Supermarket section
25 Funnyman Bill, familiarly
26 Actress — Alicia
27 Actor Beatty
29 NOW goal: abbr.
30 Sagebrush St.
31 Bishop's domain
35 Scant
36 Word from a poser?
39 Khrystyne of "Head of the Class"
40 MP's quarry
41 Puzzle's center?
43 Merriment
45 Vicinity
46 51% or greater
47 Picnic crashers
49 Away from work

Solution time: 27 mins.

RUT	MAYA	POMP
ASH	OWEN	OPIE
FORECAST	LULL	
INKY	ATISLE	
MOLDS	JAWS	
ILLS	FOREHEAD	
FREE	SOLID	VIE
FORETOLD	LEDA	
	LILY	MORAL
SMEAR	DENY	
TAMP	FOREGONE	
EGIS	ABIT	NOW
MITE	YIPS	EVE

CRYPTOQUIP

BZ OUI D GONBIQA B'Y OIM-
MBJQI, JGO BZ OBYI B'Y
PDZNBAIZO B'QQ PCOPU DZ.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: Y equals M

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.